



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Imad Majed Hamadeh

DEARBORN HEIGHTS MAN SENTENCED FOR RACKETEERING

A 51-year-old Dearborn Heights man was sentenced today to 21 months' imprisonment for charges of racketeering conspiracy, United States Attorney, Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Imad Majed Hamadeh was sentenced by United States District Judge Gerald E. Rosen in Detroit. Hamadeh pleaded guilty in July.

The indictment charged Hamadeh and 17 other defendants with operating a criminal enterprise to traffic in illegal goods, including counterfeit Zig Zag papers, counterfeit Viagra and stolen property.

U. S. Attorney Murphy was joined in the announcement by Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit FBI; Valerie J. Goddard, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Maurice Aouate, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit Field Office of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation; and Michael Cleary,

Special Agent in Charge, FDA-Office of Criminal Investigation.

“Racketeering operations that distribute the fruits of their illegal activities here or overseas provide seed money for all sorts of other illegal criminal activities. By attacking racketeering activity at it’s source - where financial incentives exists - we stop the seeds from sprouting into other areas of illegality, “ said U.S. Attorney Murphy.

The Indictment charges that between 1996 and 2004, a group of individuals worked together in a criminal enterprise to traffic in contraband cigarettes, counterfeit Zig Zag rolling papers and counterfeit Viagra, to produce counterfeit cigarette tax stamps, to transport stolen property, and to launder money. The enterprise operated from Lebanon, Canada, China, Brazil, Paraguay and the United States.

Three other defendants have entered guilty pleas and await sentencing. Also named in the Indictment and currently awaiting a January 7, 2007 trial are: Fadi Mohamad-Musbah Hammoud, 33, of Dearborn; Majid Mohamad Hammoud, 39, of Dearborn Heights; Jihad Hammoud, 47, of Dearborn; Ali Najib Berjaoui, 39, of Dearborn; Mohammed Fawzi Zeidan, 41, of Canton; and Adel Isak, 37, of Sterling Heights.

An Indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Others charged in the Indictment, who are currently wanted as fugitives, believed to be outside the United States, are: Imad Mohamad-Musbah Hammoud, 37 of Lebanon, formerly of Dearborn; Hassan Ali Al-Mosawi, 49, of Lebanon; Hassan Hassan Nasser, 36, of Windsor, Ontario; Ali Ahmad Hammoud, 64, of Lebanon; Karim Hassan Abbas, 37, formerly of Dearborn; Hassan Mohamad Srour, 30, of Montreal, Quebec; Naji Hassan Alawie, 44, of Windsor, Ontario; and Abdel-Hamid Sinno, 52, of Montreal, Quebec.

The Indictment alleges that Imad Hammoud, along with his partner, Hassan Makki, ran a multi-million dollar a year contraband cigarette trafficking organization headquartered in the Dearborn, Michigan, area between 1996 and 2002. Makki pleaded guilty in 2003 in federal district court in Detroit to racketeering and providing material support to Hizballah. Some of

the cigarettes were supplied to the organization by Mohamad Hammoud, who was convicted in 2002 in federal district court in Charlotte, North Carolina, of, among other crimes, racketeering and providing material support to Hizballah. Makki and Mohamad Hammoud, who were not charged in the indictment unsealed today, were identified as unindicted co-conspirators. They both are currently serving prison sentences relating to their activities in this matter.

The Indictment further charges that the group would obtain low-taxed or untaxed cigarettes in North Carolina and the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation in New York and bring them into Michigan and the State of New York for the purpose of evading tens of millions in state cigarette taxes. The enterprise obtained large profits by reselling the cigarettes at market prices in Michigan and New York. The enterprise sometimes used counterfeit tax stamps to make it appear that the state taxes had been paid.

In announcing the sentence, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy commended the work of the FBI, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Special Agents of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Internal Revenue Service, the Food and Drug Administration, Michigan State Police and the Dearborn Police Department. The case is assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kenneth R. Chadwell and Barbara L. McQuade.